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ABSTRACT

Several targets, tools and strategies can help the novice director of programs for preschool handicapped children in rural isolated areas work with advocates and volunteers who may offer valuable help, but who need information and direction. The fragility of intercommunity relationships in rural areas often requires the sensitive use of talents and people. Individuals who influence decisions within a given system, and who will instigate and support action for programs, should be targeted from groups which include parents and advocates, public agencies and services, clubs and organizations, schools, health facilities, public officials and government agencies, the clergy, businesses and professions. Talents of retirees, students, professionals and others, donated services of businesses (use of WATS telephone lines, postage meters, etc.), and community media (television, radio, newspapers, printers and advertising specialists) are tools that program workers must learn to utilize effectively. Strategies for project directors to master include coaching others, developing appropriate language and communication skills, avoiding situational ignorance and negativism, perfecting a sense of timing, making assignments effectively, bargaining, building bridges, creating a network, soliciting aid from other services, working with volunteers, and observing. (NEC)

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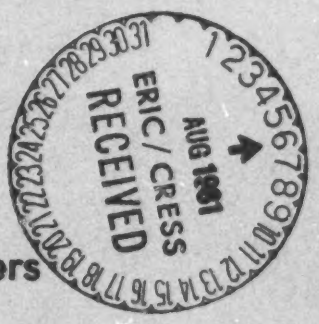
MAKING IT WORK IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

Let's Go Rural:
Influencing Decision Makers



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A Rural Network Monograph
Coordinator: Louise Phillips
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hceep Rural Network

About the Rural Network Monographs

The State of the Art Task Force has as its responsibility the collection and distribution of information related to effective strategies for delivering services to rural young handicapped children and families. During 1980-81, a series of monographs was undertaken by contributors across the country under the editorial direction of Patricia Hutinger. Contents of the first set of monographs (see back cover) reflects the most pressing needs of rural HCEEP projects. Other topics are under consideration by members of the Rural Network and will be forthcoming.

This monograph was developed pursuant to grant G007801853 from the U.S. Department of Education. Those who undertake such projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their judgement in professional technical matters. Points of view or opinions do not, therefore, necessarily represent official Department of Education position or policy.

OSE Project Officer, Sandra Hazen

June 1981
The Rural Network
Western Illinois University Press

A RURAL NETWORK MONOGRAPH

LET'S GO RURAL:
INFLUENCING DECISION MAKERS

by
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June 1981

hceep Rural Network

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In these days of economic change, inflation and budget cutting, we tend to forget that the time will come when the piper must be paid. Payoff comes in many forms. For young handicapped children, the payoff may come when failure to intervene early enough causes a child's problems to become insolvable. Failure to act early means we may have to meet the cost at a future date and at a higher rate. As educators and professionals with a deep concern for young handicapped children, we not only have to speak, we have an obligation to speak effectively to decision makers.

The Rural Network is a loosely affiliated group of people and program members concerned with services for young handicapped children in rural areas. The need to combine our voices has led to a spin-off meeting from the larger project meeting and to sessions devoted to the task of serving handicapped children in rural areas with problems caused by low incidence, distances (necessitating transportation) and scarcity of trained staff.

As a result of these like problems, we have banded together as task forces to seek solutions. One of these task forces directed its work toward ways to carry the message on how to influence decisions makers.

This book is a compilation of ideas coming from many people, projects and places. We do not consider our statements the final work, only the beginning. It is our hope that each of our readers will appoint themselves a committee of one to criticize our words, write down additional ideas and forward them to a member of the task force. The next edition has already begun.

Louise Phillips, Chairperson
Task Force - Influencing Decision Makers
Rural Network

TASK FORCE APPROACH

Task Force Approach

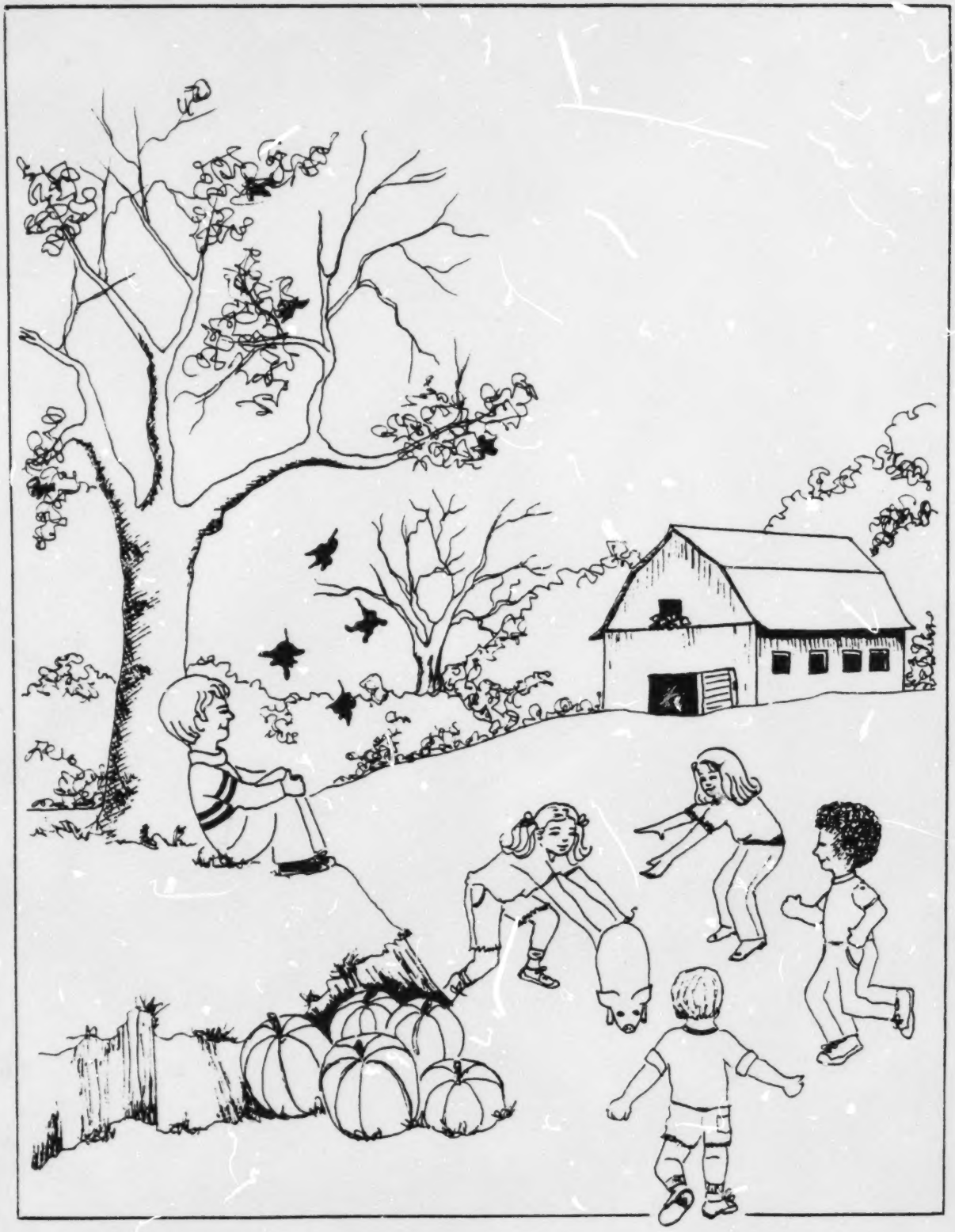
In organizing this booklet, the committee decided that it could not offer an in-depth, fully researched book. Instead, it elected to compile the many activities and methods that have been tested by programs in the network. The manuscript is directed to users in rural areas where many of the sophisticated media possibilities of the city are not available.

The urgency of spreading the word impelled us to begin assembling the practices that have been tested and proved effective. The second edition could well be a distillation of the best practices to make more precise the methods used by interventionists in rural areas. This booklet is intended to help the novice program director work with advocates and volunteers who may offer valuable help, but who need information and direction. The committee chose to start with activities that could be used with program directors of varying degrees of expertise.

The fragility of the intercommunity relationships in a rural area often requires the sensitive use of talents and people. All suggestions in this booklet should be weighed in light of the particular people and organizations with which each project director works in his or her unique setting.

From many possible approaches, the task force chose to build its suggestions around the following topics:

1. Introduction or Rationale - a brief account of the problem
2. Targets - the people, agencies and organizations who are the logical buyers as well as sellers of the program
3. Tools - the creative use of people and media tc spread the message
4. Strategies - ways to tackle the spread of intelligent information in the need for and implementation of Handicapped Early Childhood Programs in rural areas



History of the Rural Network

Society has, in recent years, begun to tackle the problems of the child with special needs. As a result, the need to educate large numbers of preschool handicapped children in rural isolated areas has assumed genuine urgency. These handicapped children deserve the same education services offered to children elsewhere in this country.

As early as 1976, HCEEP project directors began discussing the need for a group to be formed with the purpose of developing strategies for securing programs for preschool handicapped children in rural areas. In 1978 at the HCEEP Project Directors' Conference, the Rural Network emerged. Initially convened as a small group of projects serving rural areas, the consortium set some preliminary directions. The group was concerned with increasing local, state and national awareness of the needs of young handicapped children in rural areas, gaining additional resources for these youngsters, and increasing the effectiveness of projects serving them. The immediate goal of the network was to plan a national conference on early childhood special education in rural areas.

TADS and WESTAR, the HCEEP technical assistance agencies, were approached to develop this HCEEP Rural Workshop. A planning committee consisting of rural project personnel and representatives from TADS and WESTAR initially met in June 1979. That fall, a survey was conducted of all HCEEP projects to assess their involvement in rural areas and their interest in attending the workshop. The successful HCEEP Rural Workshop was held in Nashville, Tennessee, March 12-14, 1980.

During the 1979 Project Directors' Conference, two task forces were organized within the Rural Network. The "State of the Art" Task Force planned to focus on collecting and disseminating information about the needs of young rural handicapped children and current intervention approaches available in rural areas. The Task Force for Influencing Decision Makers was formed to investigate action strategies that could generate support for rural programs. After much discussion and many meetings, the Task Forces decided to compile a manual containing many of the working methods. This booklet is the result of that decision.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, early childhood special education (ECSE) has been recognized to be of critical importance to the future of children who are developmentally disabled or at risk for handicapping conditions. Long-range studies are indicating that early childhood special education does pay off as measured by the child's enhanced ability to contribute and function within the mainstream of society. Why, then, do ECSE programs not receive the political support that would enable them to expand and grow? The need seems apparent, but inadequate stimulation has failed to produce the necessary financial and program support. With the implementation of Public Law 94-142, school systems are concerned with meeting the mandates specified for the school-aged population, but few states have seen the need to lower the age of mandatory special education so that the infant and preschool population can receive educational benefits. Within rural areas, the education of preschool handicapped is an even greater issue, because the lack of appropriate funding and support services makes selling the benefits of early intervention an even more difficult task.

Rural education programs for handicapped individuals are heterogeneous (Helge, 1979) in terms of services provided and the specific service needs of the communities. Some indicate that more than 15 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 are enrolled in rural educational programs (Sher, 1978). A significant number of these children are estimated to have some type of handicapping condition (Education of the Handicapped, 1979).

Helge (1980b) reported that many problems were apparent in the rural implementation efforts of Public Law 94-142. A survey conducted by the National Rural Research and Personnel Preparation Project (Helge, 1980a) reported that particular areas of need for rural education agencies included providing support services and adequate community involvement. Reynolds and Birch (1977) have suggested that "better methods . . . must be found so that the obligation to serve children in normal environments can be realized, even for those in remote and rural areas" (p. 679).

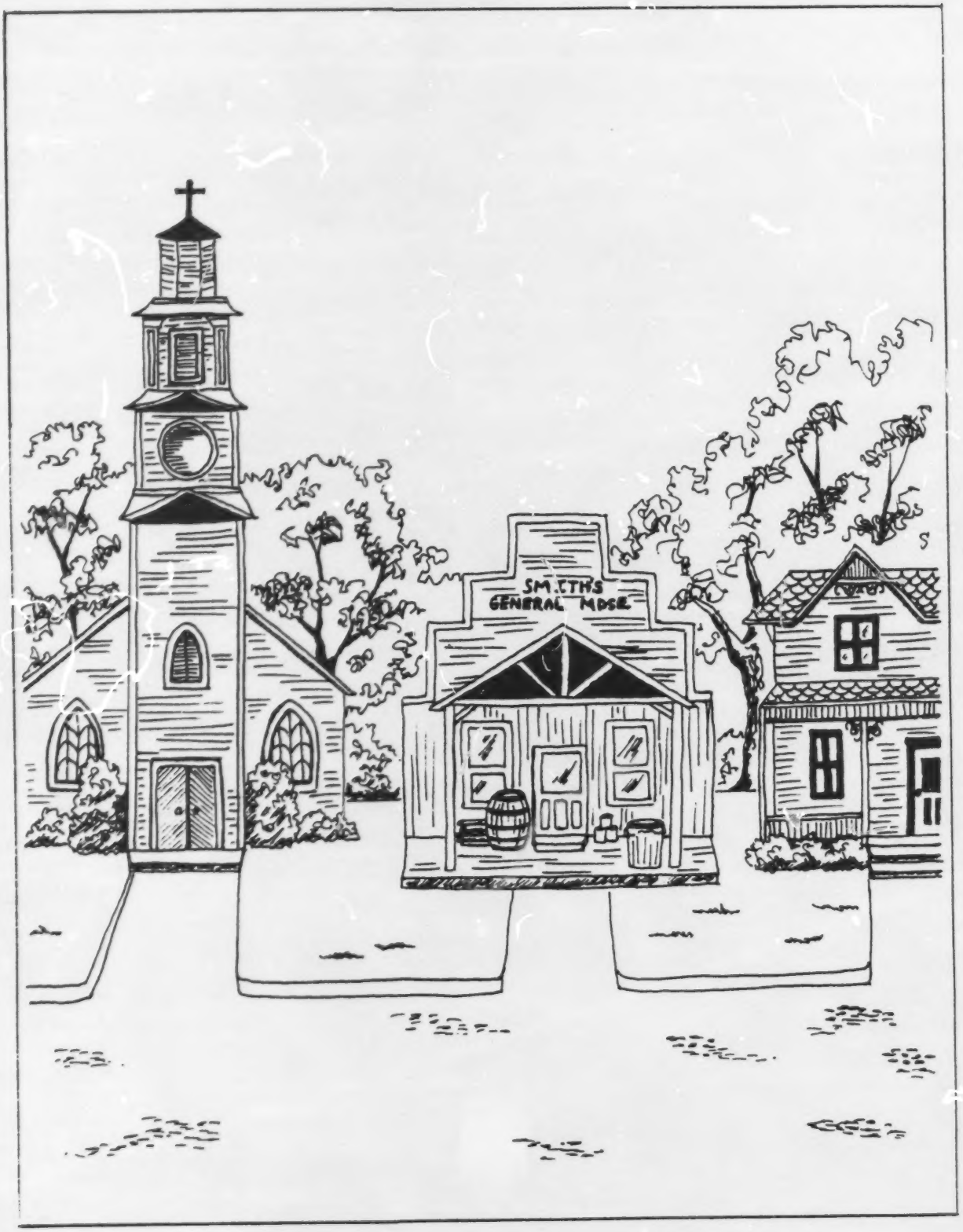
Parents, teachers and other concerned persons increasingly find themselves searching for ways to protect the educational interests of handicapped children (Bigge, 1976). Although teachers have the primary role of teaching handicapped students about their rights (Addison, 1976), all citizens must become involved in advocacy for handicapped individuals (Bigge, 1976). Once a commitment to the needs of handicapped children is realized, financial and other kinds of support are available at both the state and local levels.

Under the rules and regulations of Public Law 94-142, a myriad of services must be made available to handicapped children to enable them to benefit from special education (Federal Register, 121, a.12). Included in these services is the mobilization of school and community resources. The local community can provide both services and financial support through fund-raising activities, private and group donations and volunteer services. At the state level, legislative support can be encouraged by individuals, organizations and community agencies through lobbying and personal contacts with legislators.

Often when implementing a project in a rural area, little thought is given to building support systems that will enable the project to continue after federal funding is discontinued. This manual is the result of a need for a resource that project directors can use to help them promote acceptance of their program early in its life.

The implementation of any program begins with identifying needs, locating resources, developing strategies, and good communication between school and home. Many refer to such efforts as political action. Political action occurs on many levels and, to achieve goals, must be developed to have the greatest impact on all levels. The purpose of this manual is to provide guidelines and ideas on influencing decision makers in favor of ECSE. The primary audience for this manual is HCEEP project directors who could benefit from learning how to develop community support in rural areas.

There are several expected outcomes from the use of this manual. First, it is hoped that public policy will be influenced to mandate services beginning at birth for handicapped children in rural areas. The second expectation is that changes will be produced in the actual laws of states to provide services for preschool handicapped children. Finally, it is intended that by using the strategies outlined within this manual the user will win the battle to overcome resistance to helping young handicapped children.



TARGETS

TARGETS

Change begins with the choice of audiences that will be most effective and supportive in the development of public policy. By carefully identifying the individuals who influence decisions within a given system, one can save much time and effort in the development of strategies. Mallas (1971), in a paper presented to a special training session on aging in Austin, Texas, identified primary, secondary and tertiary levels of power. The primary powers are those few persons who are seldom heard from but who, if convinced to support a cause, can be its most effective change agents. Secondary powers include public figures such as bankers, legislators and business leaders. The tertiary powers are groups such as civic clubs, churches and parent groups. This chapter identifies many of these target individuals more specifically. These include HCEEP staff, educators and, most of all, people who might be able to identify and contact members within the three levels of power.

Parents and Advocates

Parent and special interest groups have a long history of advocating and establishing programs to serve handicapped individuals (Meyen, 1978). These groups have become highly sophisticated in their efforts to bring about change. National organizations have resulted from parent and other group efforts and have effectively used legislative and judicial processes to influence public policy. These organizations provide services to communities through their respective state and local chapters and offer a myriad of support services. Specific services include financial support, volunteer programs, public awareness campaigns and field representatives for technical or educational assistance.

Public Agencies and Services

Traditionally, the resources of public agencies have not been used effectively for the benefit of the handicapped. Although most individuals in rural areas may be aware of services available through some agencies, they may not know about the variety of resources in the community. Public agencies can enhance the service delivery system in rural communities by initiating public awareness programs regarding specific benefits offered to handicapped individuals. They may also offer support personnel for existing programs, transportation, opportunities for both sheltered and competitive employment, recreation, legal services and protection, housing, and health services.

Clubs and Organizations

Invaluable resources in any community are local clubs and organizations. These groups can upgrade the quality of existing service-delivery systems through such activities as donations, fund-raising drives, volunteer programs and making special equipment.

Schools

A federal commitment to the handicapped was mandated in Public Law 94-142. Educators and educational administrators should collectively plan to provide full and appropriate educational opportunities for all handicapped children. To supplement this effort, schools should find what federal laws are available and take advantage of them (Bigge, 1976). Additionally, a statement of state and local policy on the education of handicapped children should be secured and interpreted for local school districts. Higher institutions of learning should provide guidance in establishing due-process procedures for the local schools and should assist school districts in evaluating educational options available to students.

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Health Facilities

Health care facilities can provide respite care for parents, long-term care and medical services. These facilities can offer services ranging from minimal health care assistance for families to total care for the child depending on individual needs.

Public Officials and Government Agencies

Public officials and government agencies at the state and local levels engender support for rural programs for the handicapped. This group of individuals can form support coalitions or advisory councils to encourage the passage of supportive legislation and sanction programs and activities relating to rural programs for the handicapped. They can be contacted in person or by mail.

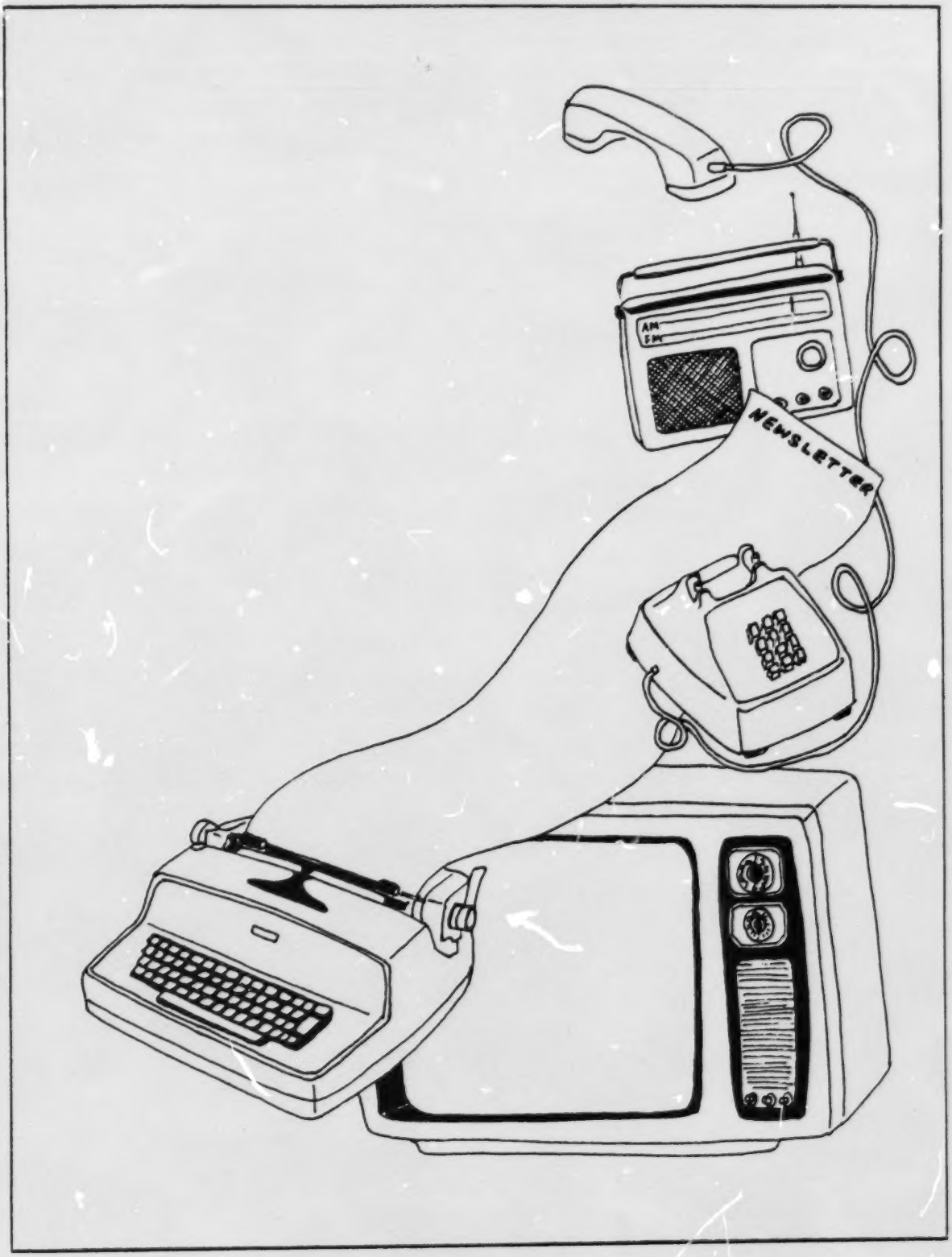
Clergy

Perhaps one of the best support systems in the rural community is the clergy. Support from churches can come in the forms of counseling with the family of a handicapped child, volunteer services to programs, Sunday School services for the handicapped, babysitting for parents, and sanctioning activities on behalf of the church.

Businesses and Professions

Businesses and professions can also act as support sytems. These professionals can provide specialized services often necessary for the handicapped, act in a professional advisory capacity, serve on advisory committees for programs for the handicapped, offer charitable donations, and sanction programs for the handicapped. They can usually be located by using local telephone directories.

An abundance of support systems are available to rural programs for the handicapped. Nevertheless, efforts in public education and awareness programming must be initiated if community interest, support and mobilization on behalf of handicapped individuals are to materialize. The coordination of programs is necessary if needs identification, intervention programs and the maintenance of effective services are to take place.



TOOLS

TOOLS

Individuals

The more people from the community who become involved in a project, the more likely that project is to be successful in securing local funding for continuation. While small communities have some residents who are more influential than others, everyone is important in a small town.

To find a labor force for small chores, the National Association of Junior Auxiliaries has chapters in many small towns, and their members are women who actively seek opportunities for service. The NAJA Newsletter, The Crownlet, Greenville, MS 38701, can give the name of the chapters in each area.

Retired teachers often make alert, intelligent and capable volunteers. While they may require transportation, these senior citizens can provide many voluntary or minimally paid services: answering telephones, typing, keeping a clipping file or scrapbook, or acting as hosts or hostesses for visitors to the project. Every area should have a program for senior citizens which can help locate such people.

Although there are some pitfalls, parents of children in the project may also help. They can answer telephones, sort mail and help around the project site with small chores. Because project directors receive a sizeable amount of mail from other projects and are on mailing lists for information just to keep an eye on what is going on, it is helpful to instruct a volunteer worker in techniques of sorting and making this information readily available for project staff. Volunters can also help with collating around report time.

Older children of project staff or teenagers in high-school vocational programs should be considered for some of these tasks. A call to the high-school principal should reap some information about the availability of students, and some projects can arrange for the students to receive credit.

If the project needs legal or accounting help, a primary source should be the carefully selected members of its advisory council. Retired people with these skills are also a possibility. Legal-aid services are usually available in most communities for a minimal fee, but free advice should be obtained when possible. One piece of information important to collect for every child in the project is the parents' occupations. When indexed by category in a notebook, the information can be drawn on by project staff whenever necessary.

Local businesses, state institutions and sometimes local offices of federal agencies may have access to WATS lines for long distance or interstate telephone use. If so, the project may be able to obtain permission to use the line after hours, that is, early in the morning or in the evening. A local business may allow the use of their postage meter machines for large mailings. The staff should keep track of long-distance time and postage; then, if the firm wishes, the staff can write a letter on project stationary thanking them for the firm's contribution in the amount of the service or postage. This will allow the firm to take an income-tax deduction. There are some legal ramifications here, and it is important that the appropriate people understand what the project is doing and why. When asking these favors of community businesses or agencies, project directors must be sure to reciprocate when the time comes. It is always a good idea to seek ways to be useful so that the project builds "credit" against the day when it needs help. Free

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service provided by the project or a thoughtful note from the director today can mean dividends of help tomorrow.

Media

What will the message be? To inform the community about the project, to identify children who need help, or to address more general issues related to the project? What kind of budget is available for media? What resources are available in the community for printing, television and photography? What are the most important things to say? What other message can wait until another day? What is the target audience for each message? Can one form of media serve more than one purpose without being cumbersome? These questions will shape the dissemination approaches the project should take.

Slick, professional brochures about the project, its purpose and activities should be designed and produced by a consultant. If a project's budget necessitates using the skills of staff and volunteers, the nearest college or vocational-technical school may have faculty or students willing to help with drawings and design. The advisory board can search out volunteer talents for layout, paste-up and photography. The brochure should be designed to meet the needs and expectations of the target audience. Excellent brochures can be produced using photographs of the children and parents involved. Slick brochures are not essential; sometimes the home-made one comes across with the truest message. Jargon known only to other professionals should be discouraged, as should saying too much. Figures and numbers should be kept to a minimum unless writing a formal report, and all copy should be interesting and readable. There are some excellent ways to test readability, and the National Cancer Institute has two booklets on this subject which apply equally well to brochures.

If anyone on staff is interested in writing articles about the project or obtaining local media coverage, rural newspapers and television stations are generally very cooperative. They need to know ahead of time when something special is planned or, for example, when the project has been funded. All news releases must be in writing, addressed to the editor (for the paper) or news editor (for television). Time spent in establishing contacts among the reporters and photographers may pay off in that they will contact the project after having received one or two good stories. It is not advisable to write a story for the reporters, but all the pertinent facts, names, dates and places should be written down for them. Both television and radio stations sometimes are required to provide a certain amount of air time for public-service activities, and a local project should command some time and attention. The local television station staff may make videotapes which they can dub onto 3/4-inch cassettes, and if they charge only for the tape, they are doing an expensive favor with the dubbing alone. The studio manager can provide, either as a public service gesture or for a fee, studio facilities and personnel for taping material needed in the project, for inserting electronically generated graphics, and for editing. If this kind of assistance is required, it will be expensive, so careful and thorough planning is needed before going to the studio in order to minimize the time required there. Generally, small stations in rural communities have a smaller profit margin and are less likely to provide free services, but it never hurts to ask. A local college or vo-tech school may have video studio facilities and students to operate them. Another possibility for both media exposure for the project and help with videotape material is the state public broadcasting system. There is usually an agency or office within the state education agency which oversees PBS stations and which can give information.

Whenever anything appears on radio or television about the project, someone on staff should note the date and time (a senior citizen shut-in might be happy to track

programming for the project), and the project director should write a short note to the station manager to thank him or her. When an article appears in the paper, the project director should thank the editor for the fine job the reporter did, and send a copy of the letter to the reporter. Copies of letters and articles should be kept for the project scrapbook or clipping file. When a picture of the project appears in the paper, copies of the photos, accompanied by a note, should be sent to anyone who appears in them. When a politician, local, state or federal, visits the project -- and they should -- the staff should arrange for news coverage and send copies to the politician for his or her records, with a note thanking the person for the visit and attention.

Topics which are likely to interest local newsmedia are:

- Activities of the children, especially those activities which recast the image most people have of handicapped children
- Activities related to special events such as Halloween, Christmas, Thanksgiving, Valentine's Day and the like
- Examples of good attention drawn to the community by the project
- Workshops for parents or personnel
- Advisory Council meetings, especially those at which action occurs
- Case studies of children who did well because of the project

Public credit is due to other agencies, institutions, individuals or projects in the community, even if their help has been minimal. Their interest and willingness to help may increase if they have been given the chance to bask in the sun with the project and its staff.

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STRATEGIES

As in any undertaking, one must have a game plan or a procedure. In this manual, the game plan is tagged "strategies." Before beginning, each person must be aware of his or her community situation, targets and tools. These factors were discussed in the previous chapters. Also, he or she must be organized and have a plan of action. This chapter addresses these strategies.

Coaching Others

Strategies deal with getting something accomplished. The project director, whom we call the "strategist," needs the assistance of others such a staff members, parents or volunteers. Often these volunteers must be coached or trained to help effectively inflence the people with power. If these volunteers know they need coaching, then the strategist's job is easy. But if the volunteers think they are automatically ready by virtue of their enlistment, the strategist has to apply some very basic persuasion techniques. He or she must train these assistants even while using their help.

The way the strategist approaches the volunteer is vital. The strategist must convince the volunteer of the importance and viability of the project. If the volunteers don't believe in what they are doing, no one else will either. The strategist must choose the volunteers carefully. Some people will be willing to work for a while, and honesty with them is imperative. They must know how much time it will take and how long they are being asked to serve. The strategist needs helpers who will work, not dead weight.

One way to choose volunteers is through observation. What people are always asked to serve on committees? Why? Do they get the job done? The strategist should get this person if possible, but be wary of overcommitments. Another good prospect is the person who is currently not on a committee, for this person may have a lot of time and energy to donate.

Sometimes the volunteers have to be "won." Complimenting their strengths or asking them to reflect on their weaknesses can help. They need to know that if they need assistance they can call the strategist. In addition, the strategist should ask them to examine their environment. Who are their friends? In which areas would they be most effective? Which areas should they leave alone? These questions must be carefully considered.

It may be that the strategist recognizes a weakness or a strength that the volunteer does not see. It is then up to the strategist to talk with this person and collaborate on a solution -- a way to use the strength or to avoid any area or person that the weakness could affect. After the strategist and the volunteers have hit that happy medium, the strategist then must be certain that all of his or her task force understands some basic do's and don't's about representing the project's interests to others.

Language and Communication Skills

The volunteers should refrain from using any type of educational or other professional jargon. Of course, they all know that OSE is the Office of Special Education and TASH is The Association for the Severely/Profoundly Handicapped, but people in the community are likely not to recognize these acronyms. During the initial encounter with prospective project supporters, the volunteers should be as brief as possible. All volunteers should be precise, but not cut and dried; that is, they should speak as

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professionals, but be open and friendly and use terms that the listener will understand. They should be personable, but not personal.

When presenting data, there must always be a printed hand-out covering the material being discussed. This helps to keep the material fresh on the listener's mind and can also serve as an accurate reference point.

The project director must insure that the volunteers know when to talk and when to listen. There are ways to listen properly, just as there are ways to speak effectively. The speakers should not be rushed or interrupted. Good listeners will take notes, and good communicators will set a time for discussion and questions later.

Basic Problems

There are some basic problems or stumbling blocks that volunteers might encounter. If anticipated, these problems can be averted or at least lessened in intensity. One problem is "forgetting." Sometimes people "forget" or don't "get around" to doing what was asked of them. Since most people do not like to be called repeatedly or reminded of things they did not do, the project's representatives must choose an alternate course. They should get to know the secretary in each office and agency and be on a first name basis with them. Secretaries are the ones to ask for help. Secretaries can notify a project representative of difficulties encountered when an agency begins work on a project-related task, and they are usually effective liaisons between the project and the agency management. Follow-up calls to secretaries provide ongoing information about the agency's progress in meeting its commitment to a project. The project's representatives should be attentive but not pushy. When the prospective project supporter is not in an office or agency, notes or personal calls are often effective.

Another roadblock may be situational or environmental ignorance. Each volunteer should know his or her subject, the subject's likes, dislikes, things that he or she enjoys talking about, things not to mention, and so forth. If the volunteer is not well-informed, he or she could inadvertently jeopardize the whole project by falling into a verbal trap.

Realistically, there will be those who support the project and those who do not. The project director and volunteer canvassers must recognize adversaries and decide how to deal with them. They can choose either to pinpoint the opposition and convert them or, if all else fails, simply to confront them. ("Hey, we've got a problem and we're both hurting the kids. What can we do about it?") The strategist also needs to discern the reason for the opposition. Are there misconceptions? Does one agency feel that it has been slighted or ignored? Where do they feel that the strategist's loyalties lie? Both the strategist and the volunteers should proceed with caution here and work gently; there are enough roadblocks without creating additional ones.

The project's volunteers should be prepared before making an appointment with a potential supporter. They must know exactly what the potential supporter can do, how much he or she can contribute and when. The volunteers must be prepared to bargain on the initial visit, and they must never make a verbal or written commitment in a meeting that cannot be carried through. It is far better for them to say "I don't know" or "I'll check and see" than to promise something that cannot be delivered.

The volunteers should make themselves available at the prospective project supporter's convenience. This will not always be possible, but it is a good policy to try and follow. In addition, they should keep accurate, up-to-date notes and files. In this way, they will always be ready to refresh their memories regarding a specific meeting or

conversation. It is a good idea for the volunteers to "write-up" each meeting and to log each phone call.

A final problem may be negativism. A prospective project supporter may not support the strategist or the project. If the volunteers know of any negative feelings, they should discuss with the strategist possible public relations tactics to help alleviate the negative situation. Good public relations is always important in maintaining a positive and supportive attitude among agencies. Calling often, volunteering to work in part-time or occasional jobs, and showing a genuine interest in each agency and its function will bring positive returns in community support.

Timing

Timing is vital. If the project needs money and the fiscal year is July-June, the time to start asking for money is September. Budgets require much planning, consideration and revision. September is usually a good time because it gives the agency July and August as "breathing time." It is during this time that vacancies are filled, programs are revamped and plans for the coming year are initiated. The September rule, however, is not a hard and fast one; September may be too late for some projects.

Another aspect of timing is knowledge of the agency. A good practice is to know what agency is awarded what money and for which period of time. Can that money be used at the agency's discretion? Is there any leeway? Or is it money tied strictly to one project? These are important questions, and a good strategist should have that information.

Timing is also vital when asking for favors. If a person has just received a professional or civic award, he or she may feel magnanimous and grant a favor here and there. The strategist should congratulate this person. Is it an election year? Elected officials and their aides and workers are looking for favors to grant, and this can benefit the project.

Timing is also important in regard to the volunteers. The strategist must recognize that a volunteer who has just won a local election is a prime candidate to talk to a state-level, elected official. A volunteer recently named to chair a state committee on mental health is a "natural" to talk to people within the department of human resources.

Making Assignments

This section fits hand-in-hand with timing. A smart strategist will carefully match his or her volunteers to their contact people. The volunteer nurse will be matched to a contact person at a nursing home. A volunteer whose husband or wife sits on the local bank board will be matched with a person in industry. It is nice if the two are friends, but it is important that they have a healthy professional respect for each other.

Bargaining

Bargaining, basically, is "You scratch my back and I will scratch yours." There are two important things to keep in mind regarding bargaining. First, no favor is too small to grant or to remember. Second, the project's representatives should maintain accurate and comprehensive records and files. Bargaining will not always be a tit-for-tat operation. There may be an extended amount of time between the favor done and the favor returned. It may be that the strategist and volunteers will need to perform several favors before receiving the return payoff.

Attitude is important here. The volunteers must be sincere and delighted to grant some favors, but not doting and willing to be manipulated. They should be crafty when granting other favors and let the person asking know that this favor will involve some work and may be a risk. This enables the volunteers to ask for a similar favor.

The volunteers should not be used. After all, the volunteers' time is valuable, too. They should never give the impression that "it was nothing." Any favor or task is something, and neither party should forget it. The bottom line on bargaining is the public school trade-off. Trade is the key word here. What can or will the project do for the public school, and what does the project want in return? Elementary principals are good targets; what do they want? Do they want inservice time? Consulting? How about the exceptional child coordinators? Do they need time donated to make materials?

This bargaining should begin immediately in the first year; and once gained, the strategist should keep that foot in the public school door. By the third year, the strategist should have both feet under the superintendent's desk.

Building Bridges

This section could be subheaded "grass-roots politicking." Basically, it is good effective public relations. The project director, staff and volunteers should get involved in campaigns in the early stages; members of the advisory committee should also be involved in campaigns. Sometimes it is worth the risk to be involved in specific campaigns. While running the risk of losing, if a candidate is strongly in favor of the project's programs, even an opponent who defeats that candidate may respect the project staff's willingness to fight for the program. Out of all those working for a program, some one of the volunteers, workers or friends may end up in several candidates' camps. A good strategist will analyze the possibilities, but not dodge the issues.

A project staff should give money if possible and time without question, doing as much work and as many favors for as many people as possible, and taking credit for the work! It doesn't help to be an anonymous worker. This hard work will pave the way for a future payoff. Again, it is important to keep records to know who does what and who asked for and received help. This information can be useful not only for payoff purposes but as a resource file.

Attending rallies, writing in the newspaper, and going door-to-door in support of someone who will be in a position to repay these efforts at a later time brings certain rewards. Above all, once the contacts are made, they must be maintained either by calling or writing often.

Developing a Network

In England there is a casual communication system known as the "Old Boy Network." It is within this system that the nitty gritty work is done among agencies. Much of this work is done after hours or over the phone. It is all legal and above board. It is simply "returning the favor." Each strategist needs his or her "Old Boy Network." This is just as applicable in the rural areas as in the city -- just different people. A good strategist should get to know the heads of the agencies, the secretaries, the folks who would like to head an agency; in short, he or she must keep informed.

Finding a contact person in the finance office helps the strategist stay aware of financial debits, credits and advances. Having contact people on all levels of government allows the strategist to ask for their help or to offer them assistance. Another

record-keeping tactic is to develop an information form on all agencies and keep them on file. This form allows the strategist to note any changes and to "read" the agency. By keeping aware of timing and approaching the agencies carefully, the strategist can form strong ties for the project and help to keep the lines of communication open with those in positions to help.

Aid From Other Services

No one project or person can do it alone. Everyone needs help from the services and resources available. Social services, mental health, public health, parents' groups, civic clubs, churches, school personnel, private organizations, special projects, scouts, senior citizens and citizens-at-large are just a few of the many resources available. A person never knows just where he or she will find an advocate. This is as true in the rural areas as in the city; only the organizations change.

The project director or "strategist" can begin by getting to know people on a first name basis in every service or organization. The name of the game here is truly "who you know," and an opportunity to mingle and meet people should never pass. The women's club is having a rummage sale? Someone from the project should go! The Parents-Teachers Association is sponsoring a fund raiser for new band uniforms? A project representative should attend by all means! It may involve giving up an evening or two or a Saturday, but the end certainly justifies the means!

A word about churches. In rural communities the church is the axis on which everything revolves. Many times, a requirement for acceptance is belonging to and being active in a local church. Sunday school classes, circle groups and other bible-study groups are important resource groups. They can be approached to sponsor one child, to counsel parents and to help transport.

A word of caution here. Project directors must be selective when choosing agency people. Many times, there are petty jealousies that get in the way. Agencies are competitive, and they have to justify their existence. This sometimes means hoarding clients in order to avoid duplication and to justify services. The strategist keeps aware of who gets along with whom in other agencies and uses this knowledge when forming committees. A <u>little</u> competition can be healthy, as long as it is friendly.

Working with Volunteers

The strategist or head planner is the leader of the volunteers, but the volunteers may be leaders in their own right. Each leader should handle his or her helpers with patience, be available for discussion, listen, weigh each fact, listen, consider individual personalities, listen, allow joint decision making where feasible, listen, utilize feedback, listen, stand behind his or her helpers, and stick to decisions once made.

One thing to remember: everyone cannot be a leader. Some people are not capable of leading, others prefer not to lead. The strategist should bear this in mind before designating a volunteer as a leader.

Observing

A good strategist watches the legislative and agency committees carefully and knows their timelines. Are they preparing to act? Is there a seat open? Who will fill it? Is it time to elect a new chairperson? Is one committee under pressure? These are all

pertinent questions that directly affect the committees' functions and products. Any of these questions can be answered through observation.

Do's and Don't's

The following is a brief overview of points each project director needs to remember:

DO:

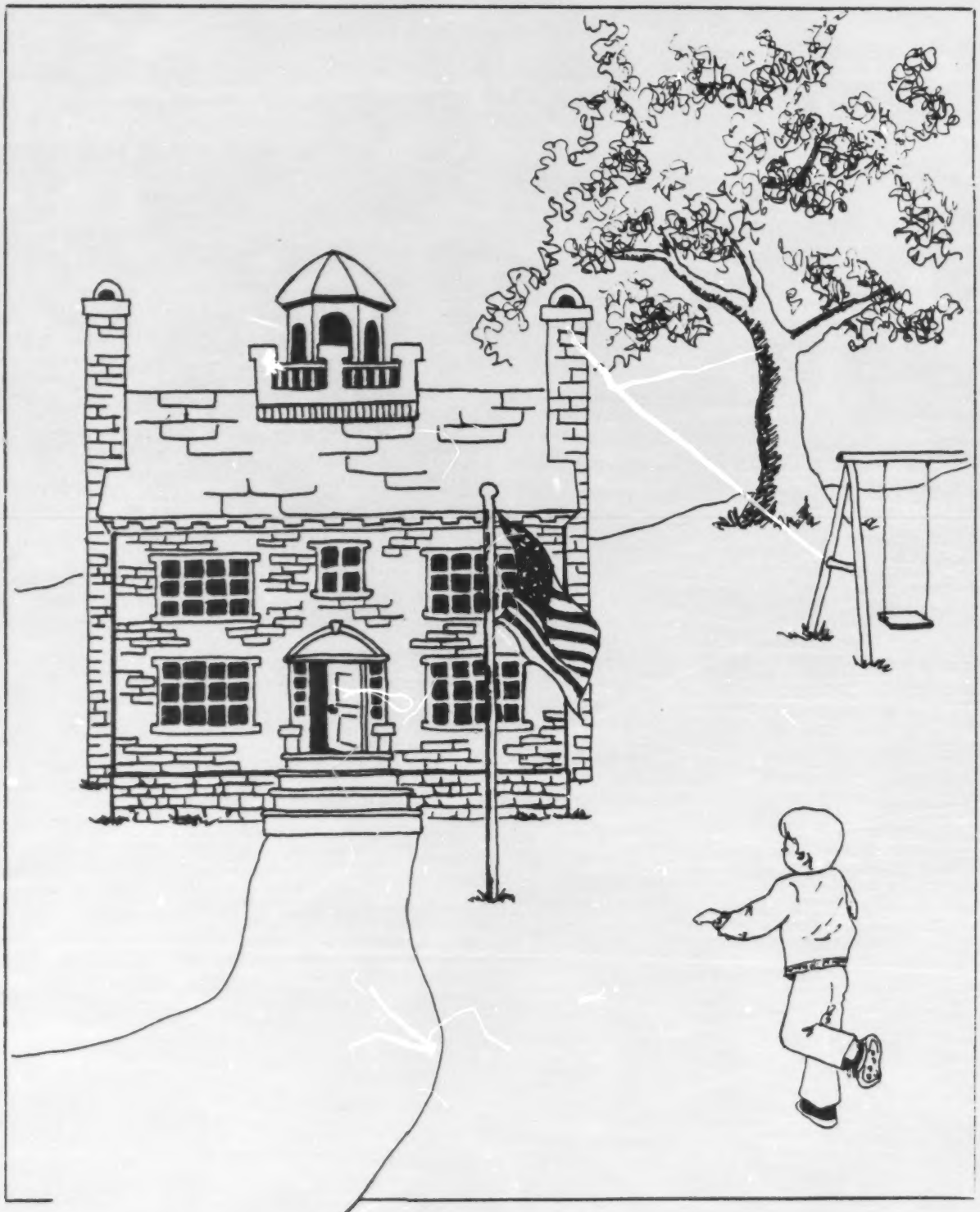
- Meet people and mingle whenever possible
- Be aware of individual strengths and weaknesses
- Know the facts before beginning
- Always listen
- Respect others, their time and their opinions
- Be professional
- Be courteous
- Keep accurate and comprehensive data
- Anticipate problems and avoid them when possible
- Be honest
- Complete assignments
- Return calls
- Be prepared
- Be positive
- Stand behind commitments
- Be available
- Master timing aspect
- Make careful assignments
- Match person to project with care
- Keep the fences mended
- Know people on first name basis
- Know who to call for what
- Be flexible
- Remember that everyone makes mistakes

DON'T:

- Get discouraged
- Be pushy
- Use education jargon
- Cancel appointments
- Be negative
- Procrastinate
- Be impatient

Conclusion

These are some general and specific strategies for influencing decision makers. There are certainly more, and these may not all work. Flexibility is important. If one avenue closes, another is there to try. Persistence, too, is important, yet all should bear in mind that the project is not a personal crusade, but a campaign to serve others.



APPENDIX A

ORGANIZATIONS

Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf
3417 Volta Place N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

The Association for the Severely Handicapped
1600 West Armory Way
Seattle, WA 98119

American Association on Mental Deficiency
5201 Connecticut Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20015

American Cancer Society
777 Third Avenue
New York, NY 10017

American Foundation for the Blind
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011

American Heart Association
44 East 23rd Street
New York, NY 10016

American Occupational Therapy Association
6000 Executive Boulevard
Rockville, MD 20852

American Physical Therapy Association
1156 15th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

American Speech and Hearing Association
9030 Old Georgetown Road
Washington, DC 20014

Arthritis Foundation
1212 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036

Association for Children with Learning Disabilities
2200 Brownsville Road
Pittsburgh, PA 16210

Office of Special Education
400 6th Street
Donohoe Building
Washington, DC 20202

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Closer Look
National Information Center for the Handicapped
1201 16th Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

Council for Exceptional Children
1920 Association Drive
Reston, VA 22091

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
3379 Peachtree Road N.E.
Atlanta, GA 30326

Epilepsy Foundation of America
1828 "L" Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20036

March of Dimes
1275 Mamaroneck Avenue
White Plains, NY 10605

Muscular Dystrophy Association
810 7th Avenue
New York, NY 10019

National Association for Mental Health, Inc.
Suite 1300
10 Columbus Circle
New York, NY 10019

National Association for Retarded Citizens
2709 Avenue E, East
P.O. Box 6109
Arlington, TX 76011

National Easter Seal Society for Crippled Children and Adults
2023 West Ogden Avenue
Chicago, IL 60612

National Mental Health Association
1800 North Kent Street
Arlington, VA 22209

National Multiple Sclerosis Society
257 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010

National Rehabilitation Association
1522 "K" Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20005

President's Committee on Mental Retardation
Regional Office Building #3
7th and O Streets, S.W.
Room 2614
Washington, DC 20201

United Cerebral Palsy Association
66 East 34th Street
New York, NY 10016

Other Advocacy Services:

Parent volunteer organizations
American Civil Liberties Union
United Way
Legal Aid Society

APPENDIX B

PUBLIC AGENCIES AND SERVICES

Department of Mental Health

State Welfare Department

State Crippled Children's Services

Vocational Rehabilitation Services

State Department of Education

Department of Transportation

Park and Recreation Authority

Social Security Agency

Public Health Department

Area Planning Commission

County Extension Service

Goodwill Industries

Salvation Army

Civil Protective Agencies

APPENDIX C

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Women's clubs

Junior League

Kiwanis

Rotary

Jaycees

Lions

Civitan

Shrine

Sertoma

College sororities, fraternities and service clubs

High school service clubs

4-H

Senior Citizens

Scouts

APPENDIX D

EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Colleges and Universities

- Education
- Special Education
- Physical Education
- Social Work

Junior colleges and technical schools

Local school systems

Medical schools

Nursing schools

APPENDIX E

HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

State residential care facilties

Private residential care facilities

Nursing home facilities

Clinics and hospitals

APPENDIX F

PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

Local city councils

- Mayor
- Council members

County Commissions

State Legislators

APPENDIX G

CLERGY

Churches

Bible study groups

State offices

APPENDIX H

BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS

- Physicians
  - Dentists
  - Pediatricians
  - Optometrists/Opthamologists
  - Orthopedists
  - Neurologists
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Speech Pathology
- Prosthesis and Appliances
- Psychologists/Counselors
- Audiology
- Architects
- Lawyers
- Financial Consultants
  - Bankers
  - Certified Public Accountants
- Chamber of Commerce

APPENDIX I

Getting the Word Out: An Annotated Reading List

Copy preparation. Eastman Kodak Company, Book Number 0-879-85-172-4, 1979. A clear, basic approach to preparing copy for reproduction. Many illustrations. About $5.00.

Graphic design. Eastman Kodak Company, Book Number 0-879-85-170-8, 1976. An excellent introduction to graphic design for those who work with graphic designers or who do their own on a limited budget. Discussions include design techniques, use of color and type styles, and graphics measurements. About $7.00.

Photography and layout for reproduction. Eastman Kodak Company, catalogue Number 179-9063, 1977. One of the best guides on the market. Takes you step-by-step through reproduction to presentation and storage of materials. Written for the novice, as are all of these Eastman publications. About $4.00.

All of the above booklets are available from: Eastman Kodak Company, Motion Picture and Audio Markets Division, 1975 Commerce Drive, N.W., P. O. Box 4778, Federal Annex, Atlanta, GA 30302.

Pretesting in cancer communications. U.S. National Institute of Health, Public Health Service, National Cancer Institute, DHEW Publication Number (NIH) 78-1493. Methods, examples and resources for improving cancer messages and materials. An excellent booklet with suggestions for improving the clarity and quality of your message. Although written for cancer agencies and groups, the material is applicable broadly.

Readibility testing in cancer communications. U.S. National Institute of Health, Public Health Service, National Cancer Institute, NIH Publication Number 70-1689. Provides techniques for testing the readibility of copy prepared for public consumption. An excellent guide with good information. (Did you know that there are readibility guides related to reading level of the reader for seven languages OTHER than English?)

The two above booklets are available free from: Office of Cancer Communications, National Cancer Institute, National institute of Health, Bethesda, MD 20205.

Nomenclature of Vocabulary (illustrations ready for copying):

White, E. T. A graphic vocabulary for architectural presentation. Architectural Media, Ltd., P.O. Box 41083, Tucson, AZ 85717. About $15.00.

A communicator's handbook. Western States Technical Assistance Resource (WESTAR), 1978, Seattle, WA. 1107 N.E. 45th Street, Suite 215, Seattle, WA 98105.

REFERENCE LIST

Addison, M. R. Citizen advocacy. Amicus, 1976, 1(4), 9-10.

BEH lacks special education strategy, expert says. Education of the Handicapped, June 6, 1979, p. 5.

Bigge, J. L. Advocacy. In J. Bigge & P. O'Donnel (Eds.), Teaching individuals with physical and multiple disabilities. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1976.

Federal Register, 1977, 42(163), 455-456.

Helge, D. A national comparative study regarding rural special education delivery systems before and after passage of P.L. 94-142. National Rural Research and Personnel Preparation Project (NRP). Grant No. G007801686. Murray, KY: Center for Innovation and Development, Murray State University, 1980a.

Helge, D. Problems identified in phase I of the National Rural Research and Personnel Preparation Project (NRP). NRP: National Rural Research and Personnel Preparation Project, 1980b, 1(2), 2-3.

Meyen, E. L. Exceptional children and youth: An introduction. Denver, CO: Love Publishing, 1978.

Reynolds, M. C., & Birch, J. W. Teaching exceptional children in all America's schools. Reston, VA: Council for Exceptional Children, 1977.

Sher, J. P. A proposal to end federal neglect of rural schools. Phi Delta Kappan, 1978, 60, 280-82.

Mallas, B. Working within the power structure to accomplish goals in the field of aging. Training Session on Aging, New Region VI, June 21-25, 1971.

About the HCEEP Rural Network

The Handicapped Children's Early Education Program (HCEEP) Rural Network is an association of professionals representing educational programs for young handicapped children in rural communities. Members are drawn primarily from projects supported by the HCEEP, Office of Special Education, Department of Education. Formed in 1978, the Rural Network undertook to provide a voice for rural America's young handicapped children and their families. The network aimed to increase educational opportunities for this population through the accomplishment of a variety of activities. Participating projects also intended to enhance their own effectiveness in providing educational and supportive services in rural areas. For further information, contact:

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Macomb, Illinois 61455

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731 Wax Myrtle Lane
Houston, Texas 77079

Additional copies of this monograph may be secured by sending $3.00 to cover cost of production and mailing to:

Rural Network
College of Education
Room 27, Horrabin Hall
Western Illinois University
Macomb, Illinois 61455

Prices subject to change without notice. 5/81-600-10281

Topics for the first series of Rural Network Monographs include:

- An Overview of Initial Survey Results
- Influencing Decision Makers
- Cost Analysis
- Parent Involvement
- Transportation
- Interagency Coordination
- Recruiting Staff
- Securing Funds
- Service Delivery Models